

Mr. W. L. SCLATER communicated the following notes on the nomenclature and taxonomy of African birds (no. 3):—

#### GEOBIASTES and CORAPITTA.

In the 'Hand-list' (vol. ii. p. 45) Sharpe states that the type of *Atelornis* Pucheran is *squamigera* Lafr., and for *pittoides* Lafr. he uses *Corapitta* Bp., or as he has emended it *Coracopitta*; but there can be no doubt that under the rules the type of *Atelornis* Pucheran is *Brachypteracias pittoides* by subsequent designation of Gray (Cat. Gen. Subgen. Bds. p. 13), while the type of *Corapitta* Bp. by monotypy is the same species. These two genera, *Atelornis* and *Corapitta*, are therefore synonyms. This leaves *Brachypteracias squamigera* to be placed in Sharpe's own genus *Geobiastes*, and the arrangement in the 'Catalogue of Birds' (xvii. p. 4) is the correct one rather than that in the 'Hand-list.'

#### INDICATOR VARIEGATA and its allies.

Zedlitz (Journ. Ornith. 1915, p. 8) was the last writer to revise this group. He recognized six forms, but probably, owing to scarcity of material, did not disentangle the confusion into which those from western Africa appear to have been plunged.

An examination of the material in the British Museum leads one to the conclusion that there are two distinct species in western Africa side by side, and that each comprises a paler and a more richly coloured race.

All the forms can be arranged as follows:—

##### 1. *I. variegatus variegatus* Lesson, 1831 : Africa.

Crown black with white edges to some of the feathers, giving a spotted appearance; these edgings olivaceous or buffy in younger birds; the mottling on the underparts does not extend below the breast.

*Distr.* Throughout east and south Africa, from southern Abyssinia through Uganda and Kenya Colony to Nyasaland, Angola, and Cape Province.

2. *I. variegatus jubaensis* Neumann, Bull. B. O. C. xxi. p. 97 (1908) : Jonte, nr. Kismayu.

Only differing from *I. v. variegatus* in its smaller size : wing 97–103 against 105–112 mm.

Only known from the types in the Erlanger collection. No specimens examined.

3. *I. maculatus maculatus* Gray, Gen. Bds. ii. p. 451, pl. 113 (1847) : *patr. null.*, but type in Brit. Mus. from Gambia.

Crown as in *I. v. variegatus*, spotted with white but with a greenish wash ; mottling and spotting of the breast extending down to the thighs.

*Distr.* Gambia and Portuguese Guinea (Gunnal, 2 ex., Ansonge Coll.).

4. *I. maculatus stictithorax*, Reichenow, Journ. Ornith. 1877, p. 110 : Cameroon.

Resembling *I. m. maculatus*, but with more richly coloured underparts, strongly washed with green.

Only known from Cameroon.

5. *I. fœæ fœæ* Salvadori, Ann. Mus. Genova, (2) xx. p. 783 (1901) : Farim, Portuguese Guinea.

Crown dusky green with no trace of white spotting below, with the mottling ill-defined and not extending below the chest.

Only known from Portuguese Guinea and Sierra Leone. Two examples in the British Museum from Gunnal (Ansonge Coll.) and one from Sierra Leone (*Kelsall*).

6. *I. fœæ theresice* Alexander, Bull. B. O. C. xxi. p. 90 (1908) : Gudima, Mombattu Country, E. Belgian Congo.

Close to *I. f. fœæ*, but with a more richly coloured crown, bright green like the back and underparts, strongly washed with green.

Cameroon (*Bates & Johnston*), east to the upper waters of the Welle at Gudima in the Mombattu Country.

## TRICHOLÆMA HIRSUTUM.

The races of this species form an interesting series, ranging through the forest region of western Africa from Liberia to Angola.

The following is a synopsis and key of the subspecies :—

## TRICHOLÆMA HIRSUTUM HIRSUTUM.

*Pogonias hirsutus* Swainson, Zool. Illustr. ii. p. 22, pl. 72 (1821) : Africa. I propose Gold Coast as a restricted type-locality.

*Distr.* Liberia and Gold Coast Colony.

## TRICHOLÆMA HIRSUTUM HYBRIDUM.

*Tricholæma hirsutum hybridum* Neumann, Bull. B. O. C. xxi. 1908, p. 46 : Degama, S. Nigeria.

*Distr.* Southern Nigeria east to the Upper Welle river.

## TRICHOLÆMA HIRSUTUM ANSORGII.

*Tricholæma ansorgii* Shelley, Bull. B. O. C. v. 1895, p. iii : Uganda. Type in Brit. Mus. from Port Alice (*i. e.*, Entebbe), Uganda.

*Distr.* Forests of Uganda from Ruwenzori to Lake Victoria.

## TRICHOLÆMA HIRSUTUM FLAVIPUNCTATUM.

*Tricholæma flavipunctata* J. & E. Verreaux, Journ. Ornith. 1855, p. 103 : Gaboon.

*Distr.* Cameroon Mt. and Cameroon, south to the lower Congo valley.

## TRICHOLÆMA HIRSUTUM ANGOLENSE.

*Tricholæma hirsutum angolense* Neumann, Bull. B. O. C. xxi. 1908, p. 47 : Golungo Alto, N. Angola.

*Distr.* Northern Angola.

The following is a key to distinguish these forms :—

1. With two white stripes on either side of the head—one from above the eye to the ear-coverts, the other from the base of the mandibles ..... 2.
- Without white stripes on the side of the head . . . . . 4.

2. Throat always black in the male, in the female whitish heavily striped with black; crown very slightly spotted ..... *T. h. hirsutum.*  
 Throat never black, always whitish streaked with black.
3. Less heavily marked with black on the abdomen; crown of female very slightly spotted with yellow ..... *T. h. hybridum.*  
 More heavily spotted on the underparts; crown of the female thickly spotted with yellow ..... *T. h. ansorgii.*
4. Spotting on the abdomen black and clearly marked ..... *T. h. flavipunctatum.*  
 Spotting on the abdomen brownish and indistinct ..... *T. h. angolense.*

***Tricholæma leucomelan namaqua*, subsp. nov.**

Closely resembling *T. l. leucomelan*, but with the underparts thickly spotted with oval spots of black. Size approximately the same as the typical form.

*Type.* A male from Klipfontein, Little Namaqualand (3100 ft.), 13 July, 1903, collected by C. H. B. Grant. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1905/12/29/455.

Two other examples (females) also collected by Mr. Grant at the same place, and a female from Springbok, also in Little Namaqualand, collected by Mr. Chas. Reid, 30 August, 1902, all show the same character.

A series from Deelfontein, Cape Province, have distinct traces of the spots, but are intermediate between the birds from the Transvaal, Damaraland, and Angola, with pure unspotted underparts, and the Namaqualand birds.

I have also seen an example of this form, now in the South African Museum, from Clanwilliam in the western part of the Cape Province.

***Micropus caffer ansorgei*, subsp. nov.**

*Description.* Closely resembling *M. c. caffer* and *M. c. streubeli*, but distinguished by the darker colour of the crown and head, which is almost as dark as the back, and not distinctly brown and contrasting with the back

as in the other two forms. In size somewhat intermediate : wing 140–143 mm.

*Type.* A male from Ndala Tando, northern Angola, collected by Dr. W. J. Ansorge, 17 Sept., 1908. Brit. Mus. Reg. No. 1910/5/6/265.

There is also in the Museum a female collected the same day, and another male obtained at the same place on 24 July, 1908. Two other Swifts collected by Petit at Landana, in Portuguese Congo, are very similar, but are smaller : wings 132 and 135 mm. They appear to be intergrades with *M. c. streubeli*.

Mr. A. H. EVANS exhibited three series of eggs of *Cuculus canorus*. The first series was collected in collaboration with Mr. W. A. Harding in, or in close proximity to, his (Manor House) garden at Histon, Cambs. Six hen-birds were undoubtedly laying eggs there simultaneously. By great good fortune those of one were so peculiar that they gave certain proof of its laying eggs in the nests of four different foster-parents; but a fact which is much more important is that the dates show that the identical bird returned to the same garden year after year.

Another set of 5 clutches, of a less peculiar type, strengthens the evidence, but here the Robin is the usual foster-parent (in three cases). In each of the other instances only two clutches were exhibited, with one egg which was laid in an empty (deserted) Pied Wagtail's nest.

The second series consisted of eggs taken on the Cam, a few miles above or below Cambridge, by Messrs. Evans and Richmond and Mills. These, taken singly or two in the same nest during a period of several years, were of two types only— one distinctly red, the other grey. All came from Reed- or Sedge-Warblers' nests; if two were found together, they were always of different hues. The dates once more show the return of the same hen in successive years, while the range extends over four or five miles in two cases.

The third series consists chiefly of eggs of two very curious types exhibited by Mr. Bonhote and Dr. Ticehurst. One type